

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown in the following listing of claims. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a thermoset including the sequential steps of:

providing a curable mixture including a liquid base thermoset component, a curing agent and expandable hollow microspheres;

allowing the curable mixture to cure, wherein a matrix forms around the expandable hollow microspheres and the expandable hollow microspheres essentially do not expand; and

applying a heat treatment to heating the cured mixture after the mixture has substantially cured, wherein so that the expandable hollow microspheres expand against the matrix causing such that a permanent deformation in the matrix occurs around the microspheres; and

cooling the cured mixture such that and compressive residual stress is created in the matrix around the microspheres mixture.

2. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the mixture comprises an epoxy resin.

3. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said providing includes adding the curing agent to an initial mixture of the liquid base thermoset component and the expandable hollow microspheres.

4. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 3 wherein said initial mixture is heated before adding the curing agent.
5. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1 further including the step of pouring the mixture into a mould.
6. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the expandable hollow microspheres comprise a co-polymer shell and gas.
7. (Previously Presented) A method as claimed in claim 4 wherein said heated initial mixture is allowed to cool before adding the curing agent.